

She was the youngest daughter of the
Rev. Samuel Aunesley D.D. ejected by the Act of
uniformity from the Rectory of St. Giles's
Cripplegate, Aug. 24, 1662.

She was the Mother of nineteen Children
of whom the most eminent were the
Revs. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY
the former of whom was under God the
Founder of the Societies of the People
called Methodists.

In sure and certain hope to rise
and claim her mansion in the skies,
a Christian here her flesh laid down,
the Cross exchanging for a crown.

METHODIST *Roots*

A Seven-Week Lesson Study
for Small Groups



GLOBAL
METHODIST CHURCH



Methodism at its best is nothing more and nothing less than vital Christianity. As John Wesley said, it is the religion of the Bible, the religion of the early church and the religion of the Church of England. We as Global Methodists want to embrace the best of our heritage and tradition. But that means we need to both remember it and understand it.

In Methodist Roots, a special teaching series with our Assembly of Bishops, you'll discover the history of Methodism and understand how key features of the faith influence the church today.

Start by watching the Methodist Roots video. This video was filmed in the United Kingdom and features significant Wesleyan sites that connect us to our Methodist heritage. After watching the video, use this study guide to dive deeper into the topics with your church, small group or in your personal devotional time. Throughout the series, you'll also learn about important and sacred places that serve as a reminder of God's faithfulness and calling. Each week, you'll experience snippets of these significant sites – from Wesley's Chapel in London to Charles Wesley's home in Bristol.



Scan to view the video

You can view the videos in English, French, Korean, Spanish and Portuguese at globalmethodist.org/methodist-roots.

Rev. Samuel Annesley D.D. ejected by the Act of
uniformity from the Rectory of St. Giles's
Cripplegate, Aug. 24, 1662.

She was the Mother of nineteen Children
of whom the most eminent were the
Revs. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY
the former of whom was under God the
Founder of the Societies of the People
called Methodists.

In sure and certain hope to rise
and claim her mansion in the skies,
a Christian here her flesh laid down,
the Cross exchanging for a crown.



Lesson 1

A BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE FIRE

God's Design in Raising Up the Methodists



READ

ISAIAH 43:1-2

“But now, this is what the Lord says — he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.’”



THINK

In 1709, a fire consumed the Wesley family's home in Epworth in the middle of the night. Coughing from the smoke, the family escaped through the flames into the cold winter's night. All except one. The neighbors spotted the terrified face of five-year-old John through an upper room window, the fire roaring beneath him. There was no time for a ladder. One neighbor climbed onto another's shoulders and pulled the boy from the window a moment before the roof collapsed in a thunderclap of flames.

John Wesley never forgot it. For the rest of his life, he returned again and again to those words from the prophet Zechariah — *a brand plucked from the fire*. God had snatched him from the flames for a reason. He was certain of it.

That conviction shaped everything. When the Methodist movement began to grow around him, Wesley asked the same question on a larger

scale: *"What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the preachers called 'Methodists?'"*

It is the kind of question only a man who believes in a purposeful God would think to ask. Not how did this happen? But why did God make it happen?

His answer, written into the earliest writings of the movement, was this: *"To reform the nation, and in particular the Church; to spread scriptural holiness over the land."* Wesley's answer was simply this — Methodism is nothing more and nothing less than vital Christianity. The real thing, the original Christian movement, burning with the fire of the Holy Spirit. He himself warned that Methodism could become *"a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power."* The fire was the difference. They were a brand plucked from the fire. They were rescued to carry the Holy Spirit's saving blaze to every corner of the land.

PRAY

Lord,

You are the God who rescues and the God who sends. I thank you that you did not leave me to myself, but called me by name and pulled me from the fire. Forgive me for the times I have lived for myself rather than for the world you love. Come, Holy Spirit — warm my heart with the fire of your love. Come, Holy Spirit — set us ablaze for the world you came to save. Make us a people who know what you have designed us for, and who carry your blaze to every corner of the land.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. Have you ever felt that God rescued you for a reason? What did that feel like, and what did you do with it?
2. Wesley believed God raised up Methodists to change the world. What do you think God has raised up your church to do?
3. What do you believe God's design is for your local church? What evidence do you see?
4. What would it mean for you — personally — to live as someone raised up for a purpose? What is one step you could take this week?





Wesley's Chapel

LONDON, ENGLAND

John Wesley was meeting with the Methodist society in London and needed a gathering place. He acquired a ruined cannon foundry just outside the city and repaired it. The Foundry was his London headquarters from 1739 until 1778. It was a center of Methodist preaching and activity, a space that provided a home for John and his mother Susanna and housed London's first free medical dispensary.

Wesley's Chapel was built for sacramental worship, including an altar in the apse behind the pulpit. The current pulpit is raised up, but is only two-thirds as high as the original. John Wesley in his journal describes the building as "perfectly neat but not fine." Over its many years, various memorials have been added to remember key figures in British Methodism. King George III donated wooden pillars for the balcony which have been replaced by marble ones at the chapel's centenary. The crypt now houses the Museum of Methodism.

The chapel is a functioning church with several weekly worship services and other ministries.



Scan to visit
Wesley's Chapel



Rev. Samuel Annesley D.D. ejected by the Act of
uniformity from the Rectory of St. Giles's
Cripplegate, Aug. 24, 1662.

She was the Mother of nineteen Children
of whom the most eminent were the
Rev. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY
the former of whom was under God the
Founder of the Society of the People
called Methodists.

In sure and certain hope to rise
and claim her mansion in the skies,
a Christian here her flesh laid down,
the Cross exchanging for a crown.



Lesson 2

WHO DOES GOD USE?

Susanna Wesley, Lay Preachers, and the Call of God



READ

JOEL 2:28-29

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”





THINK

Samuel Wesley sat at a desk, studying his Greek New Testament by the weak light filtering through the library window. Far from home — again. A scholarly man, he felt more comfortable with his books than the people of his parish. In his absence, something new and unexpected flickered to life in the warmth of the family's evening fire. His wife Susanna began holding evening prayers in their home. At first, only the family attended. Then neighbors trickled in, and then the friends of neighbors flooded in. Soon, people crowded the doorway and pressed their faces to the windows, straining to hear her voice.

When Samuel heard about it, he wrote to tell her to stop. Women did not teach. It was not the custom. It was not proper. Susanna's response was quiet, assured, and immovable. *"If you want me to stop, send me your direct command in terms clear enough to absolve me before the judgement of Jesus Christ."* Samuel heard wisdom in Susanna's words. He never sent the command. So she continued.

Decades later, John faced the same moment with a young lay preacher named Thomas Maxfield.

Maxfield was not ordained. He had no theological degree, no official standing, no permission. He had simply started preaching while John was away — and the fruits of his preaching were plain for all to see. When Wesley moved to shut him down, it was Susanna's words that stopped him. *"Take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are."* John heard the same wisdom in his mother's words that his father had learned to trust. He listened. So Maxfield continued.

From Susanna, John Wesley learned what the established church had forgotten — the Spirit of God cannot be contained by custom or credential. The Spirit moves like a flame through a young man with no ordination and through a woman holding evening prayers in her own home. What Joel promised was for all people in every age. What Susanna and Maxfield proved is still being proved today — in every language, in every Global Methodist conference, in every person willing to speak.

PRAY

Holy Spirit,

You are not limited by what we think is possible or proper. You move where you will and through whom you will. Forgive us for the times we silenced your voice in others because it came from an unexpected place. Give us Susanna's courage — to speak when you call us, and to keep speaking. Give us Samuel's wisdom and John's humility — to hear you even when your words surprise us. Pour yourself out on all of us, your servants, just as you promised.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. Has God ever spoken to you through an unexpected person — someone you might have been tempted to dismiss? What happened?
2. Susanna Wesley answered God's call quietly, without demanding recognition or permission. What does her example say to you about how you answer God's call in your own life?
3. Both Samuel and John grew wiser by listening to Susanna. Who in your life speaks wisdom that you need to hear? Are you listening?
4. Is there someone in your church or community whose gifts are going unrecognized? What could you do to change that?





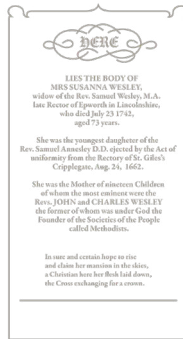
John Wesley's House

LONDON, ENGLAND

John Wesley's House was built soon after the construction of the Wesley Chapel. Previously, John Wesley had resided in the Foundry, but in 1779 this became his home. One floor was for his use and other floors were for visiting preachers. The front room was his study and contains his desk and some of his library. The windows look west onto Bunhill Fields and his mother's grave. The bed in which he died was sold in the 1800s, but a similar one is in the bedroom now. Just off the bedroom is a small closet where he prayed regularly. The house has been restored to reflect an 18th century décor.

Scan to visit
John Wesley's
house

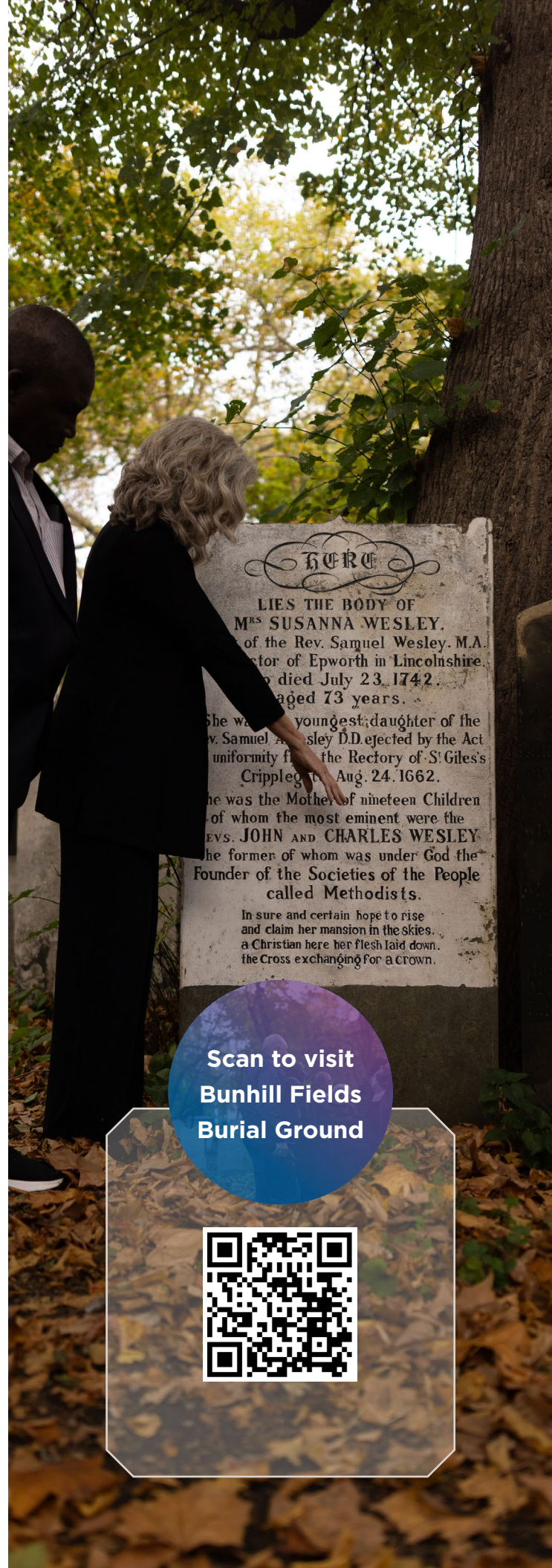




Bunhill Fields Burial Ground

LONDON, ENGLAND

Bunhill Fields (shortened from “Bonehill”) was used as a cemetery for London’s citizens who were not members of the Church of England. They were called Dissenters because they worshiped in other Christian churches, thus dissenting from the Book of Common Prayer. Persons buried there include John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe* and the hymnwriter Isaac Watts. Susanna Wesley was buried there upon her death in 1742. This is the cemetery closest to the Foundry. While she was a member of the Church of England and the wife and mother of Anglican clergy, her grandparents were all dissenters.



Scan to visit
Bunhill Fields
Burial Ground



Rev. Samuel Annesley D.D. ejected by the Act of
uniformity from the Rectory of St. Giles's
Cripplegate, Aug. 24, 1662.

She was the Mother of nineteen Children
of whom the most eminent were the
Rev. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY
the former of whom was under God the
Founder of the Societies of the People
called Methodists.

In sure and certain hope to rise
and claim her mansion in the skies,
a Christian here her flesh laid down,
the Cross exchanging for a crown.



Lesson 3

A HEART STRANGELY WARMED

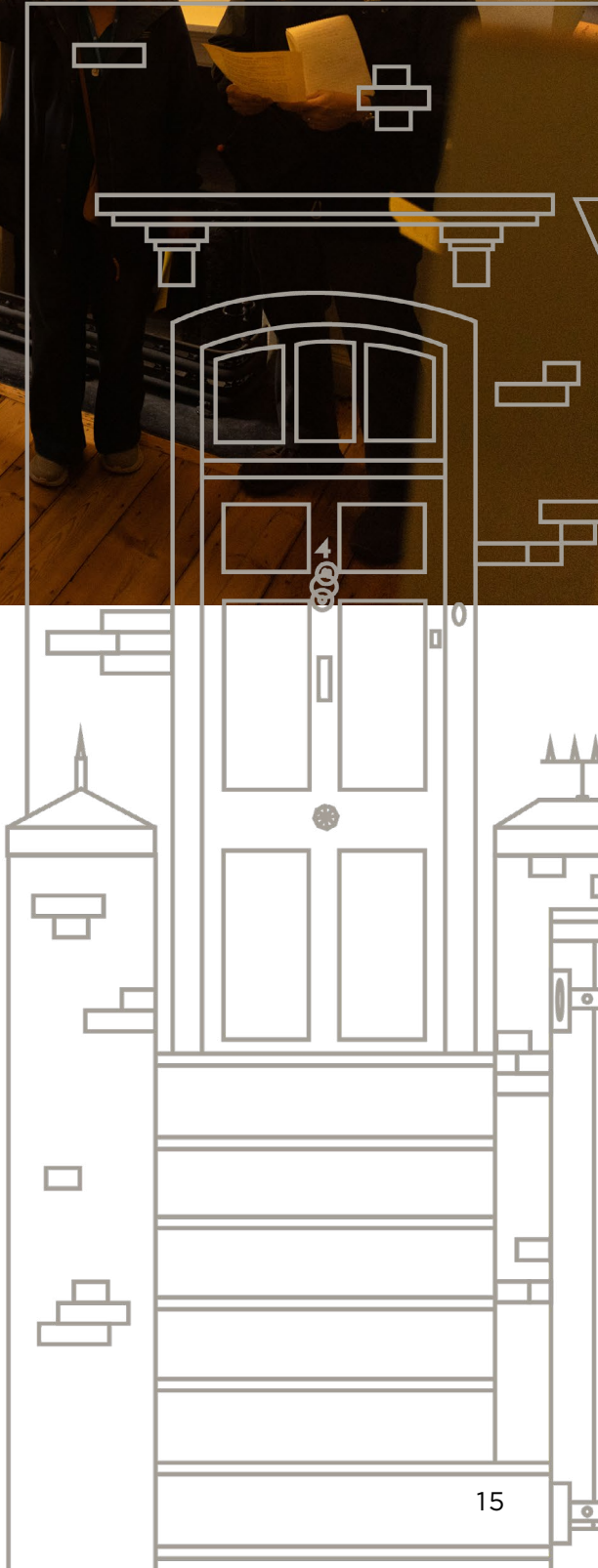
The Conversions of John and Charles Wesley



READ

ROMANS 5:1

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."





THINK

The ship pitched and rolled in the darkness of the storm. Waves crashed over the deck. The mast groaned. Below, passengers clung to anything stable, screaming their prayers to survive the night. John Wesley braced himself between the walls, certain he was about to die.

Then, in the quiet spaces between the smashing of the waves, he heard something unexpected. Singing.

A group of Moravian Christians sang hymns, their voices clear and steady beneath the howling wind — calm, full of joy, unafraid to die. Wesley pushed through the darkness to find them. He heard their peace. He felt only fear.

That moment revealed something that years of religious discipline had never uncovered. He had kept every rule. He had prayed, fasted, fed widows and orphans, visited prisoners. And yet he was afraid to die. The rules. The discipline. The years of effort. None of it had purchased what he needed most — the knowledge that Christ had died for him and given himself for him. That his sins were truly forgiven.

His brother Charles received it first. On May 21, 1738, Charles finally stopped striving and trusted Christ alone for his salvation — and the

forgiveness he had searched for washed over him like a wave. This is what Wesley would later call justifying faith. The joy of it poured out of Charles as a hymn. John heard his brother's peace but felt only fear. He kept searching. He kept praying. Three days later, on May 24, 1738, John sat in a house on Aldersgate Street while someone read aloud from Luther's preface to Romans. *"About a quarter before nine...I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine."*

I did trust in Christ alone. That is justifying faith — faith not earned but received, forgiveness not strived for but given. He had seen it in the peace that carried the Moravians through the storm. He had heard it in the joy that poured out of Charles as a hymn. Now, at last, it was his own. Wesley called this moment his justification and new birth — the passage from almost a Christian to altogether one, from the form of faith to the fire of it. Wesley would spend the next fifty years carrying that gift to everyone who would receive it. It is exactly what Methodism, at its best, has always offered the world.

PRAY

Lord Jesus,

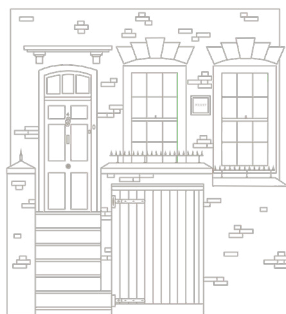
You did not die to give me a religion. You died to forgive me and give me peace with God. Like John Wesley, I have kept rules, said prayers, and done the work. And like John Wesley, I am sometimes still afraid. I have heard what justifying faith sounds like. I have seen what it looks like in others. Now I want it for myself. I stop striving. I trust you — Christ alone — for my salvation. Take away my sins. Even mine. Warm my heart, Holy Spirit. Let me know, in my bones, that I am yours.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. Have you ever experienced a moment when something you believed in your head became a reality you knew in your heart? What happened?
2. John Wesley followed every religious rule and still felt far from God. Have you ever felt that way? What was missing?
3. The Moravians were at peace in the middle of a storm. What does that kind of peace look like in someone's life? Have you seen it in others? Do you have it yourself?
4. Romans 5:1 says we have peace with God through justifying faith. Do you know that peace? If not, what would it mean for you to trust Christ alone for your salvation?

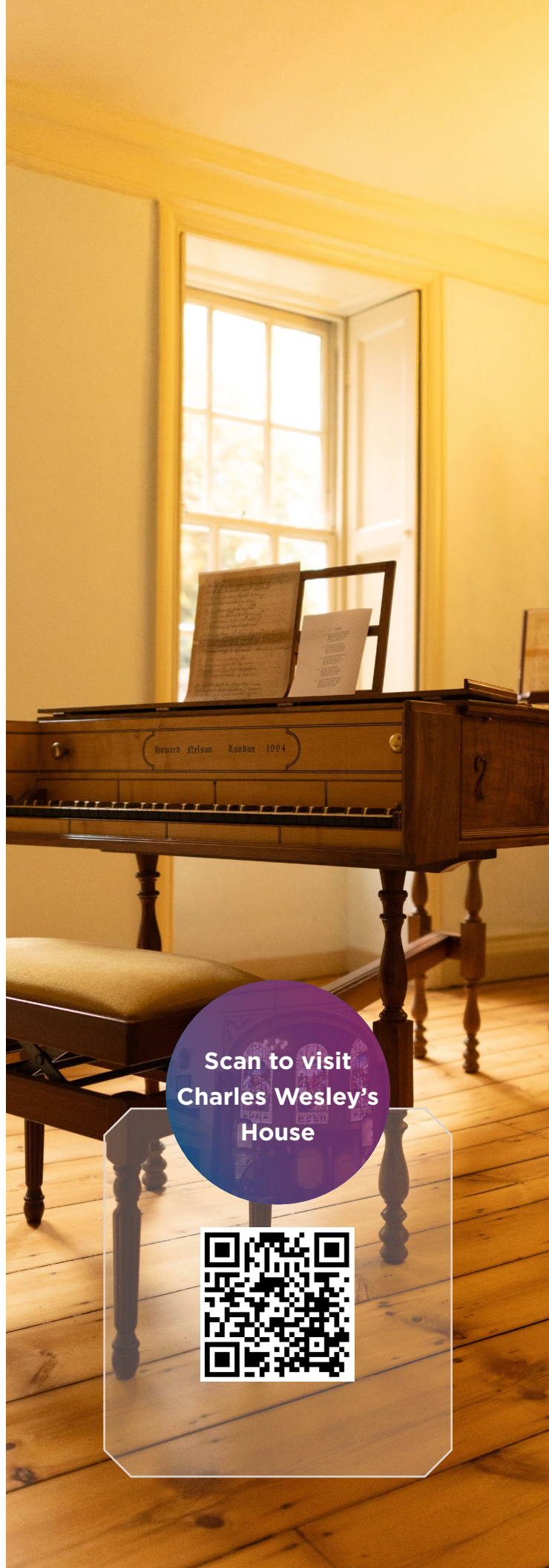




Charles Wesley's House

BRISTOL, ENGLAND

In contrast to his older brother, Charles Wesley had a happy marriage. Sarah Gwynne was from northern Wales and believed strongly in the Methodist movement. They married in 1749 and moved to Charles Street in Bristol. Charles was an itinerant preacher like his brother and shared in leadership of the Connection. However, his happy homelife and his calling as a hymn-writer led him to stay at home more than John did. Over his lifetime he wrote more than 8,900 hymns. He and his brother published many different hymnbooks. Charles and Sarah lived in this Bristol house for 22 years and had eight children, only three of whom survived infancy. Their sons Charles and Samuel became well-known church musicians.



Scan to visit
Charles Wesley's
House



Rev. Samuel Annesley D.D. ejected by the Act of
uniformity from the Rectory of St. Giles's
Cripplegate, Aug. 24, 1662.

She was the Mother of nineteen Children
of whom the most eminent were the
Rev. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY
the former of whom was under God the
Founder of the Societies of the People
called Methodists.

In sure and certain hope to rise
and claim her mansion in the skies,
a Christian here her flesh laid down,
the Cross exchanging for a crown.



Lesson 4

WHAT DOES GOD DO IN THE LIFE OF FAITH?

Scriptural Holiness



READ

EZEKIEL 36:26–27

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."



THINK

John Wesley kept a diary. Not the kind where a person records the events of their day, but the kind where a man measures himself against God. Every hour accounted for. Every failure noted. He visited prisoners in their cold cells. He established schools for children who had nothing. He fasted until he was weak. He prayed until his knees ached. And at the end of every day, he opened his diary and asked himself the same hard question — was it enough?

It never was.

This is the trap that holiness becomes when we misunderstand it. A measuring contest we can never win. A standard we approach but never reach. Wesley knew this trap from the inside. He had built it with his own hands. This was the man before Aldersgate.

But the God who spoke through Ezekiel had something different in mind entirely. Not a higher standard to achieve, but a heart transplant to receive. *87y1* The man fleeing wrath, measuring himself against God in the pages of a diary, could not produce a new heart by striving. God had to

give it. At Aldersgate, Wesley received it. The fear left. Faith and forgiveness came. And the Spirit who moved in began to change him from the inside out. Now his work flowed not from striving but from a deep reservoir of peace, love, and gratitude.

This is what Wesley called scriptural holiness. Not the holiness of the diary and the measuring stick, but the holiness of the transformed heart. No diary could produce this. No discipline could earn it. Grace alone creates it.

This transformation is not something we achieve. It is something we receive. The Scriptures describe its holy fruit simply — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Not a list of rules to keep, but the natural outpouring of a life the Spirit has taken up residence in. A heart of flesh, not stone — beating more and more like the heart of God.

Scriptural holiness was never meant to be the achievement of the exceptional few. It is the birthright of every child of God.

PRAY

Lord,

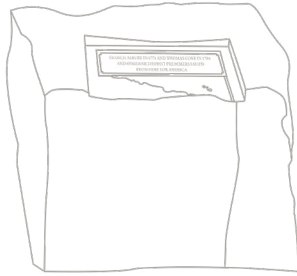
Many times I have tried to earn what you have always offered me freely. Remove the stone from my heart. Give me a heart of flesh. Fill me with your Spirit. Make me the kind of person whose love, joy, and patience are not the result of my own effort, but the overflow of your life in mine. This is your will for me. I receive it.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. Have you ever experienced faith as a measuring contest you could never win? What did that feel like?
2. The Scriptures describe the holy fruit of a Spirit-transformed life as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Which of these do you most long for God to grow in you?
3. What does it mean to trust the Spirit to create ever more holy and abundant fruit in your life?
4. Wesley believed the Spirit could so transform a human heart that love — not duty, not fear, not guilt — becomes its truest and deepest motivation. Do you believe that is possible? Do you want it for yourself?





Pill Sailing Site

PILL, ENGLAND

In the 1700's, Bristol was the second largest city in England and the primary port for those sailing to America. Ships would anchor in deep water and passengers would take a smaller boat from shore out to ship. One of those launching places was a village near Bristol called Pill. From this site, Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey set sail from Pill for America on September 18, 1784. A few days earlier John Wesley had ordained Whatcoat and Vasey as deacons and elders, and set apart Coke as a general superintendent for the work in America. At the Christmas Conference in Baltimore, the American preachers elected Coke and Asbury as bishops and Coke ordained Asbury as deacon and elder, and then consecrated him as bishop on consecutive days.



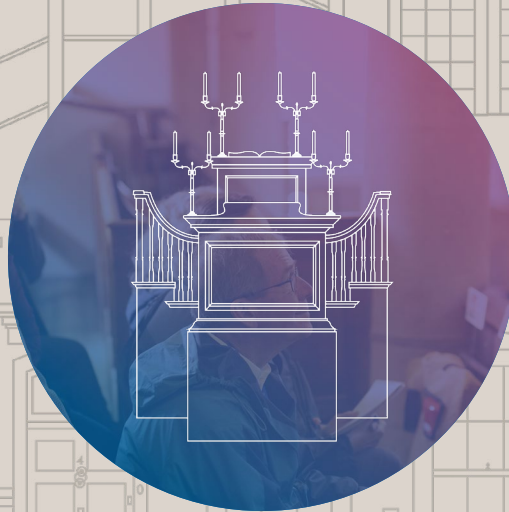
Scan to
visit the Pill
sailing site



Rev. Samuel Annesley D.D. ejected by the Act of
uniformity from the Rectory of St. Giles's
Cripplegate, Aug. 24, 1662.

She was the Mother of nineteen Children
of whom the most eminent were the
Rev. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY
the former of whom was under God the
Founder of the Societies of the People
called Methodists.

In sure and certain hope to rise
and claim her mansion in the skies,
a Christian here her flesh laid down,
the Cross exchanging for a crown.



Lesson 5

INTO THE FIELDS

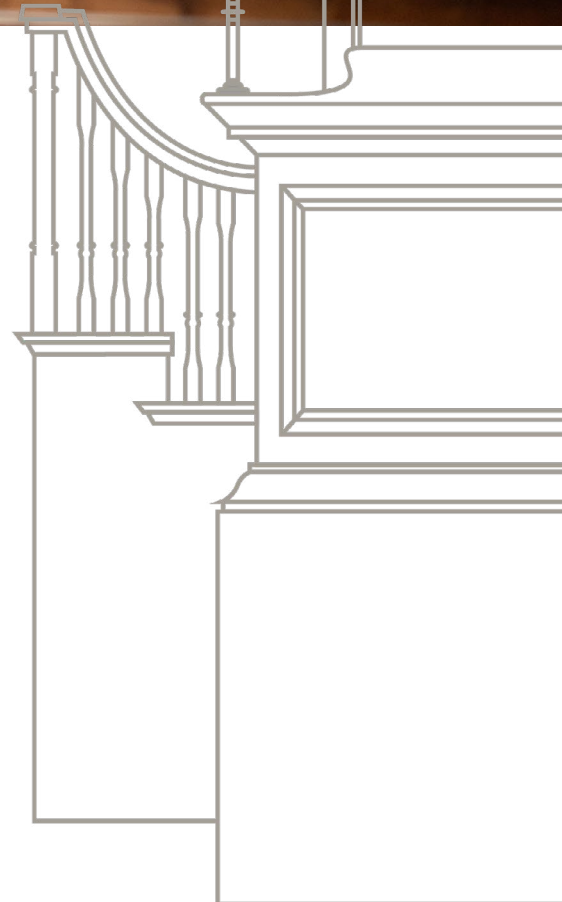
Evangelistic Zeal



READ

LUKE 4:18-19

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”





THINK

They were not the kind of people who came to church. They were coal miners — men who descended into dangerous mines before sunrise and came up again at sunset, black-faced and bone-tired. The pews of the church were for the respectable, the language of the church for the educated. The doors of the church were open in theory but closed in practice to anyone covered in coal dust and reeking with the sweat of hard labor.

In February 1739, George Whitefield walked into the fields outside Bristol and began to preach. He learned the surprising truth that although the church would not go to the coal miners, the coal miners would come to the preacher. Crowds gathered that neither the church could hold nor wanted to hold. He wrote to his friend John Wesley and urged him to come.

Wesley hesitated. He was a Church of England minister. Ordained men preached from lofty pulpits, not in muddy fields. Preaching outside was improper and embarrassing. Everything in his careful, ordered nature resisted it. It felt wrong. But was it wrong? On April 2, 1739, he humbly wrote in his journal that he had agreed

“to be more vile” and walked to the field. The text he chose declared what he had come to believe — that God had good news for the poor.

What Wesley saw from the top of a tree stump in that field changed him forever. Three or four thousand people, hungry for the gospel, standing in the open air. People the church had written off. Wesley looked out and saw exactly who Jesus had described — the poor, the captive, the blind, the oppressed. His purpose had found him.

The faith that Wesley received at Aldersgate and the holy fruit the Spirit had produced in his heart was never meant for him alone. The fruit was always meant to be given to others. That field outside Bristol was where the giving began. From that open field, Methodists blazed with a holy zeal that refused to wait inside the walls of a church. This was their mission — to carry the bright news of the gospel to the people who lived in darkness. They went to the crowded city streets, the dark mines, and the muddy fields — wherever people were poor in spirit and hungry for grace. They were sent to carry the Holy Spirit’s saving blaze to every corner of the land.

PRAY

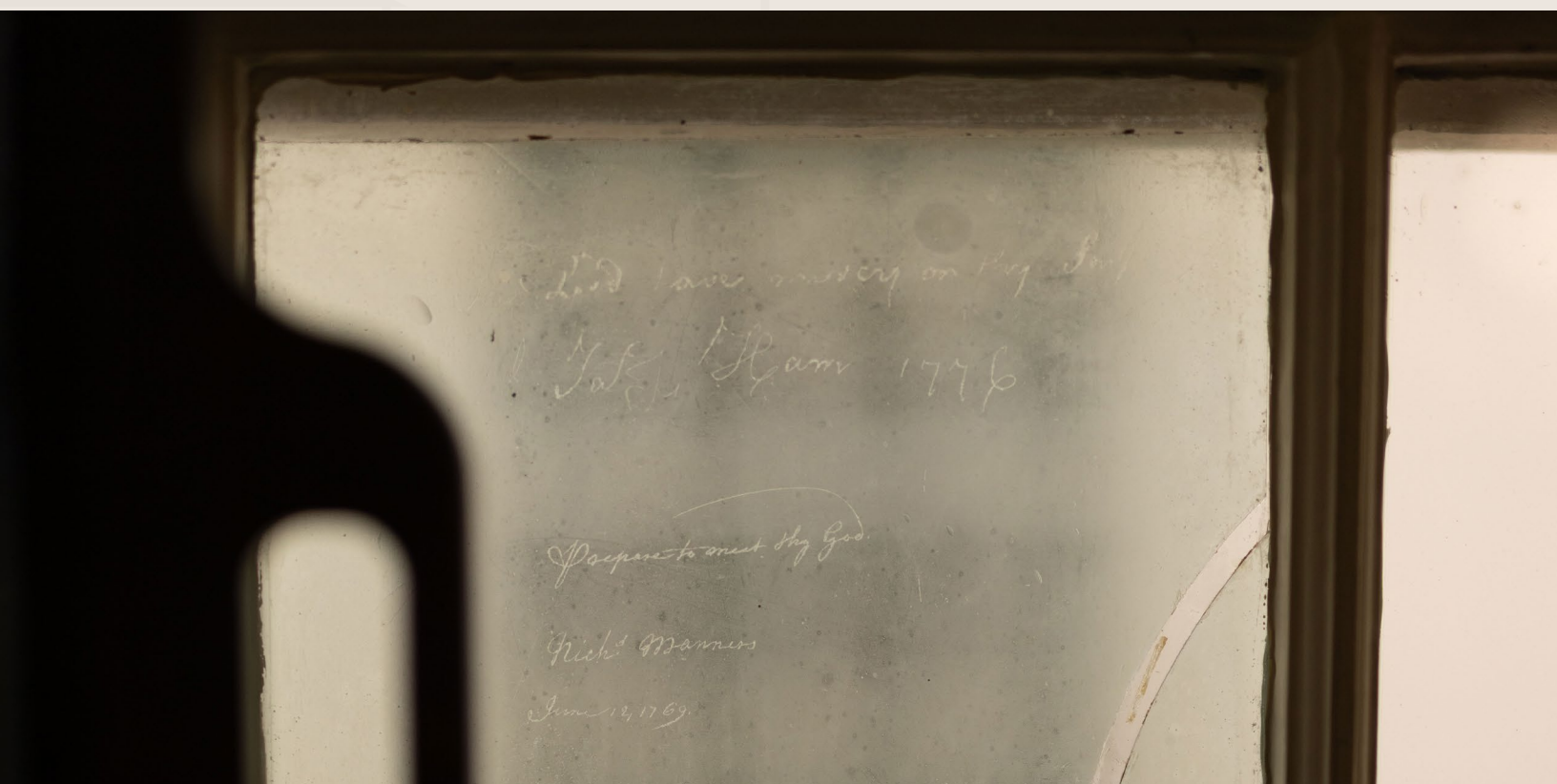
Lord,

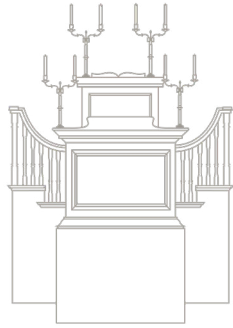
Forgive me for the times I have waited inside comfortable walls for the lost to find their own way to you. Give me the zeal of Wesley in that field — the willingness to be uncomfortable, to look foolish, to go where you are already at work. Anoint me with your Spirit to bring good news to the poor, freedom to the captive, light to those who live in darkness. And give me the courage to go.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. Who are the people in your community who would never walk through the doors of your church? What keeps them away?
2. Wesley “consented to be more vile” — meaning he was willing to look undignified for the sake of the gospel. What would that kind of willingness cost you?
3. Jesus said he was anointed to bring good news to the poor, freedom to the captive, and sight to the blind. Who are the poor, the captive, and the blind in your community?
4. What is one step your church could take to bring the gospel to people who would never come looking for it?





John Wesley's New Room

BRISTOL, ENGLAND

With the Moravians and others, John Wesley formed religious societies to help people find salvation. There were two societies in Bristol, but after he started preaching outdoors, many more people joined the societies. To provide space for the growing groups, Wesley obtained land in a district of Bristol called the Horsefair and built a building. It is the oldest continuously used Methodist worship space in the world, dating back to 1739. It was used for preaching services, class meetings, a medical dispensary and services for the poor. Starting in 1744, Methodist preachers in connection with John Wesley met for a conference annually, and some of them were held in the New Room.

Scan to visit
John Wesley's
New Room



Rev. Samuel Annesley D.D. ejected by the Act of
uniformity from the Rectory of St. Giles's
Cripplegate, Aug. 24, 1662.

She was the Mother of nineteen Children
of whom the most eminent were the
Rev. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY
the former of whom was under God the
Founder of the Society of the People
called Methodists.

In sure and certain hope to rise
and claim her mansion in the skies,
a Christian here her flesh laid down,
the Cross exchanging for a crown.



Lesson 6

HOW DO WE GROW IN HOLINESS TOGETHER?

Accountability and the Class Meeting



READ

JAMES 5:16

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”



THINK

It started with a debt. Wesley had borrowed money to build the New Room in Bristol — a preaching house for the growing Methodist society — and the mortgage was coming due. Someone suggested dividing the members into groups of twelve. Each person would give one penny a week. A leader would visit each member in their home, collect the penny, keep the accounts, and make sure everyone contributed. Simple. Practical. Entirely unspiritual.

But something unexpected happened.

As the leaders began visiting those under their care, they discovered that there were members who were not living as they ought to. Some were not living in harmony with their neighbors. Others had drifted back into sinful habits and patterns of life.

When the leaders reported back to Wesley, it was as if a switch had been flipped. He suddenly realized what the Methodist societies had been lacking all along — a system of spiritual accountability.

What had begun as a practical method for collecting membership dues became something far more important. It became a way to watch over one another in love.

Wesley formalized the practice. Members were organized into small groups called classes,

meeting weekly in someone's home. Each gathering included conversation, prayer, encouragement, and honest reflection. And every week the class leader asked each member a simple but searching question — *“How is it with your soul?”*

This question required something the church had long since stopped asking — the truth. Not the performed truth of Sunday morning, when everyone files in wearing their best clothes and their best faces. This question required the truth of ten o'clock on Friday night. The question did not let people hide. A man confessed that he had been cold toward God all week and had not opened his Bible. A teenager confessed that he had spoken with contempt to his father. A woman confessed that she had been nursing bitterness toward a neighbor. And in that confession, something began to change. This was how holiness happened — not alone, but together, in the honest company of people who asked the hardest question.

Wesley understood what we have largely forgotten — that holiness is not a solo project. The transformed heart does not beat in isolation. It needs the friction of honest community, the fellowship of shared prayer, and the accountability of people who know your name and your shame, and will not let you disappear. We do not become holy alone. We never have. We never will.

PRAY

Lord,

We confess that we have often tried to follow you in secret and alone, hiding our struggles from the people who could help carry them. Forgive us for the performance of faith without the practice of it. Give us the courage to ask and answer the hard question — how is it with our souls? Knit us together in honest community. Make us people who tell each other the truth in love, pray for each other with faith, and refuse to let each other go.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. Is there anyone in your life who knows the honest answer to the question — how is it with your soul? If not, what has kept you from that kind of relationship?
2. What keeps people — what keeps you — from the kind of honesty the class meeting required? What would have to change for your church to become that kind of community?
3. Wesley believed that when a person's soul grows closer to God, their whole life changes. Have you seen that happen — in your own life or in someone else's?
4. What would it look like for your church to recover this practice? What is one step you could take toward deeper accountability this week?



EXPLORE

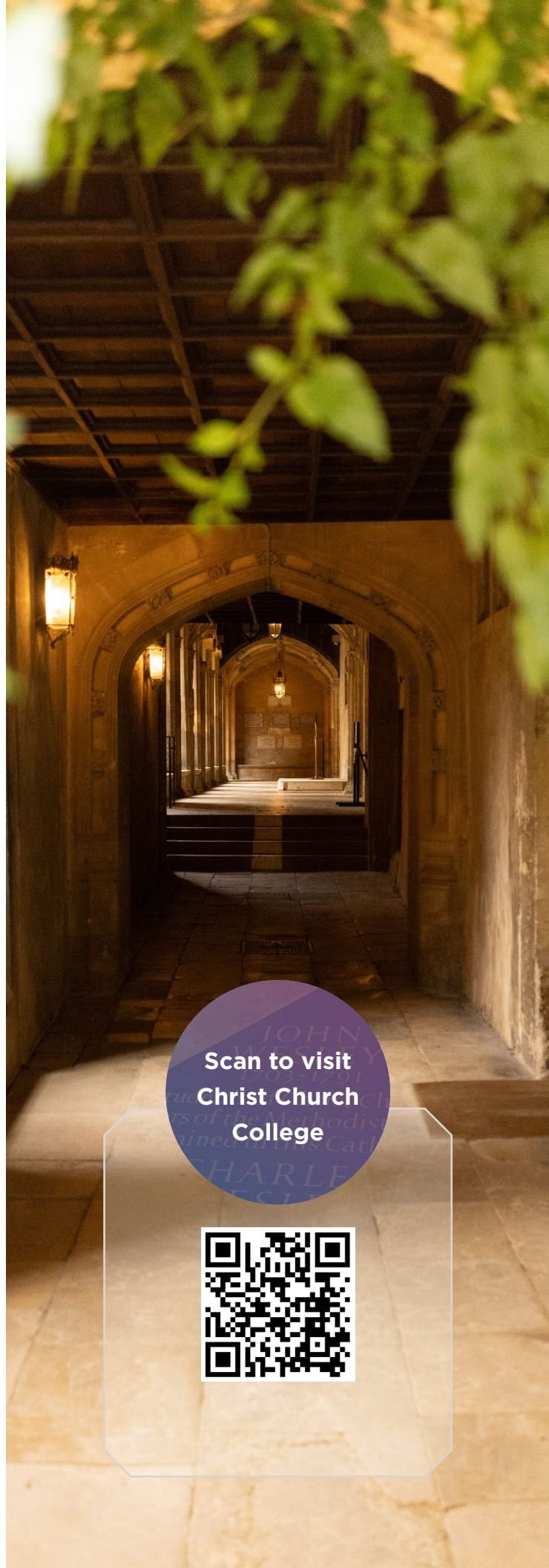


Christ Church College

OXFORD, ENGLAND

John Wesley went up to Oxford from his time at the Charterhouse School in London. His college was Christ Church, perhaps the most prestigious of the colleges that made up the University. He graduated in 1725 and started studying for his ordination examinations. That year, he read Bishop Jeremy Taylor's *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Holy Dying*. He realized that it was very important to measure how he spent his time. He began keeping a diary to gauge his progress toward holiness. The next year he was elected a Fellow of Lincoln College.

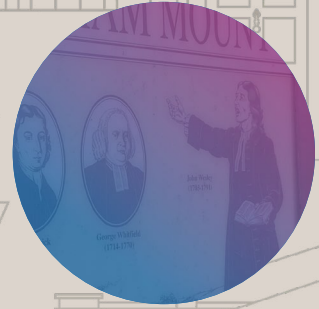
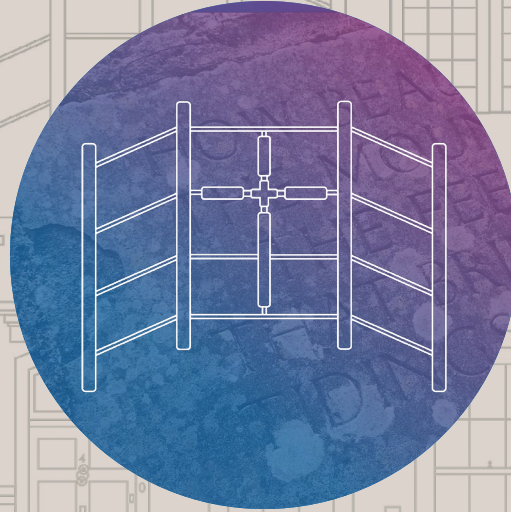
Scan to visit
Christ Church
College



Rev. Samuel Annesley D.D. ejected by the Act of
uniformity from the Rectory of St. Giles's
Cripplegate, Aug. 24, 1662.

She was the Mother of nineteen Children
of whom the most eminent were the
Rev. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY
the former of whom was under God the
Founder of the Societies of the People
called Methodists.

In sure and certain hope to rise
and claim her mansion in the skies,
a Christian here her flesh laid down,
the Cross exchanging for a crown.



Lesson 7

HOW DOES GOD SUSTAIN US?

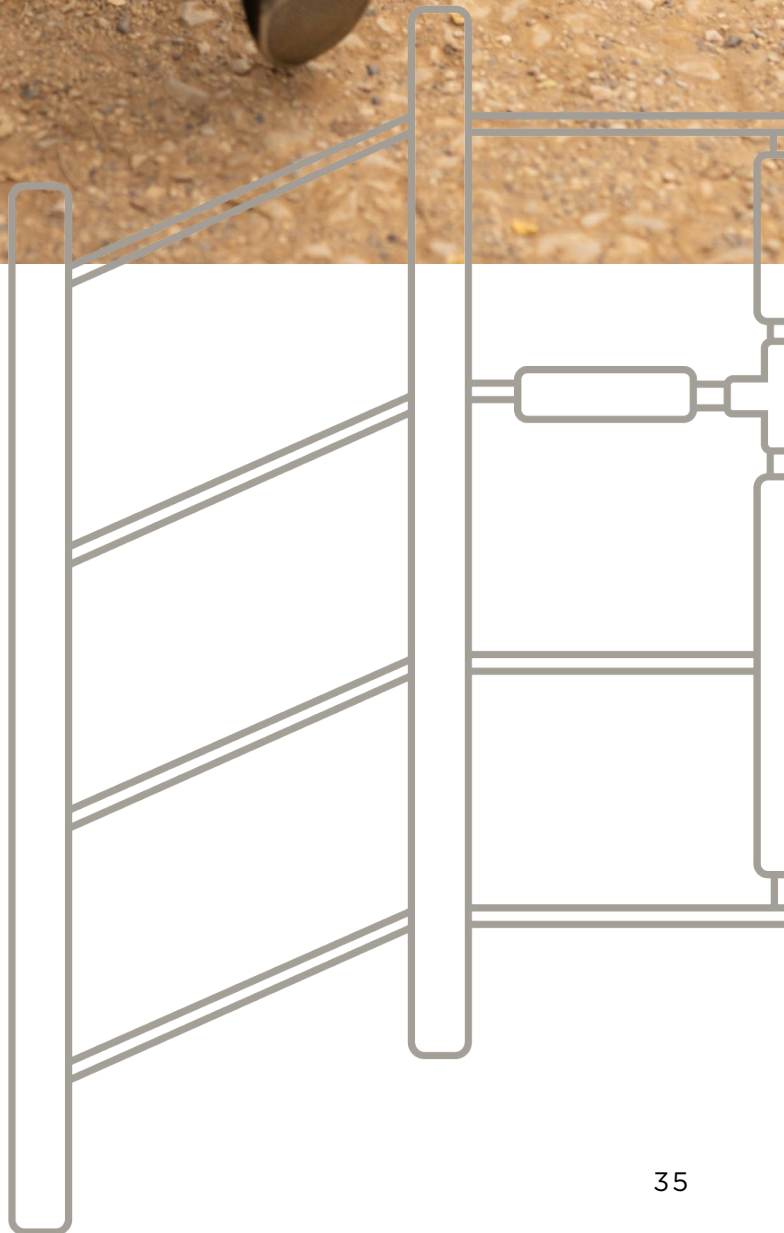
The Means of Grace

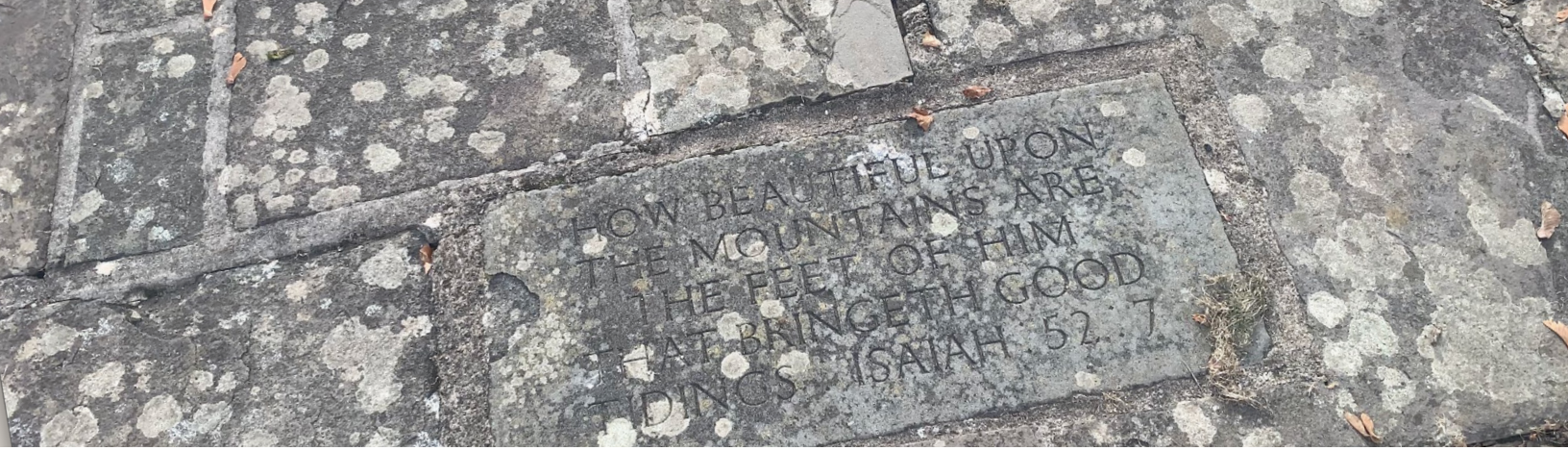


READ

ACTS 2:42

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”





THINK

She looked longingly at the bread and the wine that the priest offered. But she would not leave her seat. She was not sure that she was saved. She was not sure that she believed enough, or felt enough, or was enough. The Moravian teachers had told her clearly — do not come to the table until you have assurance. Wait. Be certain first. Then receive.

John Wesley disagreed. Sharply.

Not with her. With the counsel she had been given. Wesley had spent years doing exactly what she was doing — waiting to feel certain before he would dare approach God. He knew where that road led. He had walked it himself, all the way to a ship in a storm, terrified and alone. The Moravians were right that assurance mattered. But they had the order exactly backwards.

You do not wait for grace and then have fellowship with God through the Lord's Supper. You take the Lord's Supper because you need the grace of fellowship with God.

Wesley argued that God had established ordinary channels through which he pours his grace into the lives of people who are seeking him. He called these the means of grace. Reading scripture. Prayer. Worship. Fasting. The Lord's

Supper. The honest conversation of believers with one another about the things of God — what Wesley called Christian conferencing. These means of grace were not rewards for those who had already become holy. They were the path towards holiness. The very path along which God walks with us, transforming us to become more and more like him.

This is what the first Christians understood instinctively. They devoted themselves — not occasionally, not when they felt like it, not after they had achieved enough certainty — to the teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayer. They devoted themselves constantly, together. They used the means of grace because they needed the grace. And the grace came because they used the means.

Wesley calls this *the system of grace* — a whole way of life ordered around the channels through which God works. This is the living Christianity that the Spirit pours out on all people — the poor, the broken, and the lost. Use God's means. Trust God's grace. This *system of grace* lights the blaze of scriptural holiness that Global Methodists seek to spread over the whole world.

PRAY

Lord,

Forgive me for the times I have stayed away from you because I did not feel worthy to come close.

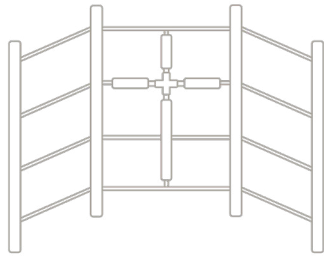
Forgive me for thinking that I could become holy without being near you. You have given me every means of grace that I need to know you — your Word, your table, your people, your Spirit. I come now, not because I am clean enough, but because I want to know you and become like you. Meet me here. Pour your grace into my life through every channel you have opened. I am yours.

Amen.

REFLECT

1. Have you ever stayed away from God — from prayer, from worship, from the table — because you did not feel worthy or certain enough? What kept you away?
2. Wesley said prayer, scripture, worship, and communion are the path towards holiness — not the reward for already being holy. How does that change the way you think about these practices?
3. Acts 2:42 describes the early church devoting themselves to four things — teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Which of these is strongest in your life? Which needs more attention?
4. What would it look like for your church to be a community that walks together along the path of grace, constantly and expectantly?





Hanham Mount

BRISTOL, ENGLAND

John Wesley first preached out of doors on April 2, 1739. He said that prior to this, he had been “so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that [he] should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.” Watching George Whitfield and experiencing the large crowds, he realized that field preaching was a way of reaching the people. Hanham Mount became one of his regular places for outdoor preaching. For the rest of his life Wesley insisted that carrying the gospel to where the people gathered out of doors was an important part of Methodist ministry.



Scan to visit
Hanham Mount

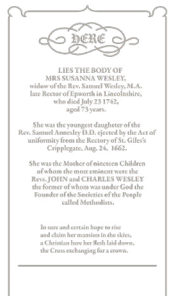
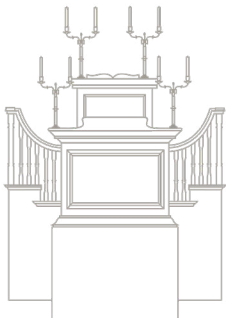




METHODIST *Roots*

Thank you for journeying with us through *Methodist Roots*, reflecting on the foundation of Methodism and how we can fulfill the calling to spread scriptural holiness across the globe.

As you reflect on our rich Methodist history, find ways to live out the faith in your own life—whether creating class meetings as Wesley did, or practicing the ways of holistic Christian living.





GLOBAL

METHODIST CHURCH

The *Methodist Roots* video lesson was produced by the Global Methodist Church in collaboration with Bishops Kimba Evariste, Leah Gregory, Bishops Scott Jones, Eduard Kheguy and Mark Webb. Study guide curriculum was written by Bethany Ross.

Photos featured in this study guide document the Assembly of Bishop's pilgrimage to historic Wesleyan and Methodist sites in the United Kingdom. Key locations include Wesley's New Room, Charles Wesley's home in Bristol, John Wesley's home in London, Christ Church at Oxford University and others.

For more information and to view other teaching series, visit globalmethodist.org.